

## CHAPTER 10

# Change of Command and Retirement Ceremonies

*Change of Command.* Traditional ceremony surrounds the important military occasion of change of command whether of a ship or shore activity. The following recommendations regarding invitation format and the sequence of events are offered to supplement both the existing Navy regulations on the subject and the individual desires of the principal participants. Annex I is provided for additional reference.

### INVITATION

Invitations are normally headed by a replica of the personal flag of the officer being relieved or a commission pennant. An appropriate format is:

Commander in Chief, U.S. Joint Forces  
and  
Supreme Allied Commander  
requests the pleasure of your company at the<sup>1</sup>  
Change of Command Ceremony at which  
Admiral John Paul Jones, United States Navy  
will be relieved by  
Admiral Robert Louis Smith, United States Navy  
on Friday, the twenty-first of June  
at ten o'clock  
on board USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69)  
Pier 12, United States Naval Station  
Norfolk, Virginia

R.S.V.P.  
(757) 428-3941

Service Dress White  
Civilian Informal

An invitation to a reception following the ceremony if included is on a smaller card that is enclosed with the basic invitation. It may appear as:

Reception  
immediately following the ceremony  
in Alumni Hall  
United States Naval Academy  
Annapolis, Maryland

<sup>1</sup> While it is equally correct to use the engraved invitation that requires the writing of the guests' names, it is no more correct than the fully engraved invitation which "requests the pleasure of your company," and it creates needless work in the preparation.

Sample R.S.V.P. card:

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Accept the Change of Command Ceremony invitation  
\_\_\_\_\_ Number in party

\_\_\_\_\_ Unable to attend

Inquiries/R.S.V.P.: (757) 428-3941

### PROGRAM

A sample program for a change of command ceremony is as follows:

Arrival honors	
National Anthem	
Invocation .....	<i>Chaplain</i>
Remarks .....	<i>Guest Speaker</i>
Presentation of Award (if presented) .....	<i>Designated Presenter (i.e., ISIC, Guest Speaker, etc.)</i>
Remarks and reading of orders .....	<i>Officer being relieved</i>
Full Honors to officer relieved	
Oath of office, if required	
Reading of orders, remarks, and assumption of Command .....	<i>Officer relieving</i>
Full honors to officer relieving	

### SEATING ON THE PLATFORM

Seating for the official party should be in keeping with official precedence. Using the departing Commanding Officer as the host figure for the occasion, follow the customary alternating pattern of senior man or woman to the host's right, second senior to his/her left, etc. This generally has the additional advantage of situating the principal participants relatively near the lectern.

### RECEIVING LINE

The receiving line at the reception which follows such an occasion is normally comprised of the aide, outgoing officer as host, spouse of host, incoming officer, spouse, and an additional officer. The latter who is added to prevent a lady ending the line may well be the executive officer, public affairs officer, or other officer as determined by the host. If it is deemed desirable to include the principal guest and his/her spouse in the line, they would stand guest and spouse following the spouse of the host and before the incoming officer.

## RETIREMENT CEREMONIES

Retirement ceremonies, because of their similarity to change of command ceremonies (and often concurrent) should be organized in much the same way as a change of command ceremony. One possible difference is that there is only one central figure and he/she is the one retiring. The officer retiring should play a major role in the planning of his/her retirement ceremony.

Where possible, the guidance of change of command ceremonies should be followed:

*Invitation.* In the case of a retirement ceremony alone, an invitation would be worded as:

Commander, Naval Intelligence Command\*  
requests the pleasure of your company  
at a Retirement Ceremony of  
Rear Admiral Thomas Ray, United States Navy  
on Friday, the eighteenth of March  
at ten o'clock  
Admiral Leutze Park, Washington Navy Yard

R.S.V.P.  
(703) 692-1056

Service Dress Blue  
Civilian Informal

\* This would be the host figure for the event.

*Combined Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony Invitation.* In some instances, change of command and retirement ceremonies are combined. A properly worded invitation would be:

Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command  
requests the pleasure of your company  
at the Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony  
at which  
Rear Admiral John Smith, Supply Corps, United States Navy  
will be relieved by  
Rear Admiral Henry Jones, Supply Corps, United States Navy  
on Friday, the thirteenth of April  
at half past eleven o'clock  
Admiral Leutze Park, Washington Navy Yard

R.S.V.P.  
(703) 695-1234

Service Dress Blue  
Civilian Informal

***\*\*Use of Printed Material and Mailing.***<sup>2</sup> Ceremonies qualifying for the use of printed material at public expense are those approved as official and necessary for conducting public business.

When coincident with a change of command, a retirement ceremony is official, and accountable public funds may be used for printed materials.

A military retirement not coincident with a change of command may be judged official by the senior military officer within the immediate activity concerned in those instances where the activity authorizes and funds an official retirement ceremony. When so determined in writing by the senior military officer to the local Defense Printing Service component, accountable public funds may be used for printed materials.

Official announcements of official retirement and change of command ceremonies may be mailed using appropriated fund postage. Postage will not be pre-paid on R.S.V.P. cards. An invitation to a related reception immediately following such ceremonies may be included in the official mailing of the announcement if it does not result in any increase in cost to the government and does not include an advertisement for or endorsement of any enterprise.

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<sup>2</sup>Paragraph 2, enclosure (1) of SECNAVINST 5603.2D